# On This Day of Remembrance

***Prayers for Worship, Remembrance Sunday***

*These resources are intended to address a wide variety of needs across the church. (See “What do we celebrate on Remembrance Day?” [Nov. 1, 2017] at* [*www.united-church.ca/blogs/round-table*](http://www.united-church.ca/blogs/round-table)*.) My deepest hope is that these prayers—many of which seem to contradict each other, and lead us in opposite directions—might represent the fullness of our complex and complicated relationship with war, violence, justice, peace and sacrifice.
—Rev. Dr. Neil Parker, military chaplain at the 4th Canadian Division Training Centre in Meaford, ON*

## Call to Worship

On this day of Remembrance, O God, we give thanks:

**For peacekeepers and pacifists; for those who served on the front lines, and those who protest and march; for those who volunteered and those who waited anxiously at home; for those who hoped that things would get better, and those who could not stand by and wait.**

We give thanks for those who believed that the world could be a better place.

**We remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, trusting that others could and would carry the torch.**

We give thanks for those who were once enemies who have become friends and allies.

## Prayer of Confession

O God of life and death and life beyond life: we confess our love of quick and simple solutions. We avoid complexity in favour of simple and shallow answers; we prefer slogans to solutions. We are too prone to look back after setting our hand to the plough. We do not want to commit to the long haul.

When we reflect on our history of the things that make for peace and the things that make for war, we confess that we have resorted to violence instead of the hard work of seeking just and fair solutions. At other times, we have been reluctant to hold others to account, and have ignored injustice and even cruelty. Forgive us for our unwise use of our own power.

## Prayer of Confession

O God, we confess that we have been afraid. We have been indecisive when others’ lives were threatened, too concerned about politics and precedent. At other times, we have been quick to jump in, assured of our own righteousness and the justness of our cause. We have too often prayed to you to support our own prejudices and goals. Forgive us, and give us courage to seek peace with justice in your world, wherever that may lead us.

## A Prayer for the Armed Forces

O God of hosts, God who calls us to be engaged in the world; we pray for those who are serving in our Armed Forces; soldiers, sailors, air personnel, and those who provide support for them. We pray for clerks and gunners, navigators and parachute packers, infanteers and public affairs officers. We pray for those who care for those who fight: for mental health nurses, doctors, and chaplains. We pray for those who put themselves in harm’s way; for Search and Rescue Technicians, for those engaged in mine-clearing, for those in the air or on the high seas. Keep them safe in their tasks; keep them virtuous in their calling; preserve them from danger, and return them to those who love them.

## A Prayer for People of Courage

We offer to you, O God, our prayers for those who seek justice and resist evil. We pray for those who need your presence and strength to stand firm; for those who are oppose the use of violence in any form in faithful response to the Prince of Peace. We pray for those are prepared to be firm to protect those in danger. We pray for those who walk with others who need strength. We pray for those who protest, those who organize letter campaigns, those who give sacrificially on behalf of others.

We pray for those who speak the unpopular truth; who protect the unpopular victims; who choose the unpopular path of peace.

We pray for those who do not let their desire for peace hinder the requirements of justice, and for those who do not let their zeal for justice override the call for peace.

## A Prayer for Our Enemies

O God of every human being, forgive when we identify our kin too easily as enemies. Teach us to seek the good of all, and not only our own. When our cousins are acting unjustly or causing harm, help us to constrain them without hatred or evil thoughts, but to seek their good even as we resist the damage that may be caused.

We pray that those to whom we are opposed may be turned from enemy to friend. We pray that in our cause we may not fall into sin, so convinced of our own righteousness that we are unaware of our own sin. We pray that we are not so distracted by another’s sin that we cannot be convinced of their value as children of God. May we always remember your willingness to forgive, and to bless, and to call the most unlikely of saints.

## A Prayer for God’s Protection

Dear God, we confess that we are frightened by our helplessness in the face of natural disasters like hurricanes and human disasters like war. We pray, dear God, for our safety and the safety of our loved ones. We pray, dear God, for the safety of all who stand in harm’s way.

But if there is no escape from the tumult, we pray that we will never forget that you are standing in the midst of it with us, that you will never desert us, that you will offer us unlimited comfort and strength to face what must be faced, and do what must be done.

We pray, dear God, to remember that in times of storm or calm, in war or in peace, we are all neighbors dependent on one another for our survival. And before the next storm comes, dear God, remind us to ask the questions that are ever on your heart:

Are the storms that come a product of our sinful disregard for your world that has led to global warming, undrinkable water and unbreathable air?

Have we failed to see that some of our neighbors are more vulnerable to the storm because of age, disability or economic restraints?

And when the storm passes, do we lose sight of what we must do to protect one another and be better neighbors to one another? When the storm approaches, dear God, let our first thoughts be of our neighbors who face the same fate.

And whatever happens in the storm, dear God, hold on to us, protect us, and use us. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

*“A Prayer for God’s Protection” reprinted with permission:
Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary, National Council of Churches (www.ncccusa.org/news/MK.hurricanes.html)*